

Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Uniontown, AL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected Uniontown for a Brownfields Pilot. Uniontown is a small, rural community of 1,730 in west central Alabama, 30 miles west of Selma. The city's poverty rate is 41 percent; 67 percent of residents have low to moderate incomes; 65 percent of the population is African American; and the unemployment rate is 10 percent, slightly more than twice that of the State of Alabama and the United States. The city's population has declined 18 percent over the past 20 years, leading to lower property values and sociological, economic, and environmental problems throughout the area. Unemployment is a serious problem in Uniontown, caused by the departure of four factories that were the city's major employers. These factory closings resulted in the layoff of the majority of the city's workforce.

The Pilot is focusing on three properties in Uniontown. One of these, the King Pharr vegetable canning factory complex, was one of the area's major employers until it closed in 1974. The factory lay abandoned for several years, until the city purchased the property for redevelopment into an industrial park. For a brief period, the property was used to store "carbon black," a material used in cement and coloring products. Although a non-hazardous substance, the

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Uniontown, Alabama

Date of Award:
September 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: Uniontown targets three properties on the east side of the city for cleanup and redevelopment.

Contacts:

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(334) 628-2011

U.S. EPA – Region 4
(404) 562-8661

Visit the EPA Region 4 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region4/waste/bf/bf.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

presence of carbon black has left potential purchasers with the perception that the property is contaminated.

OBJECTIVES

The city plans to revitalize the area by restoring and reusing existing resources. A high priority is the redevelopment of the King Pharr factory site, which would create jobs and improve the local tax base. To aid the community plan to redevelop the property into an industrial park, the Pilot will assess the site, assist with cleanup and redevelopment planning, and investigate innovative ways to finance cleanup of this property, as well as other targeted brownfields in the area. The Pilot also plans to involve the community in its activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Produced a project newsletter;
- Identified, inventoried, and targeted three brownfields properties; and
- Begun assessments on the three targeted properties.

The Pilot is:

- Developing innovative methods to finance cleanup of the targeted sites;
- Developing innovative cleanup methods for the targeted sites;
- Preparing cleanup and redevelopment plans for the targeted properties; and
- Conducting public outreach and involving the residents/community in town meetings relating to cleanup and redevelopment of the targeted sites.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Uniontown Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities, including the following:

- The city has created a nonprofit community development corporation called the Uniontown Brownfield Redevelopment Corporation (UBRC) to involve the community in the cleanup and redevelopment process.